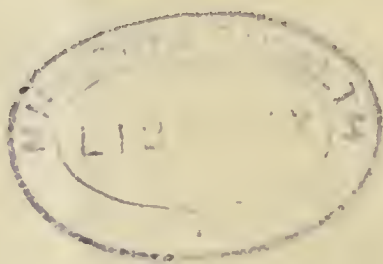



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**REPORT OF THE
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH**

For the Years 1951, 1952, 1953



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GENTLEMEN,

I beg to present my report for the years 1951 to 1953.

SECTION A

1. Statistics of the Area

Area (in Acres)	...	...	...	1,096
Registrar General's estimate of population	...	...	...	4,300
No. of inhabited houses at the end of 1953 according to the rate books	...	...	...	1,520
Rateable Value	...	...	...	£23,968
Product of a Penny Rate	...	...	...	£96

2. Vital Statistics

(a) Live Births

	1951	1952	1953
Male	43	57	59
Female	68	31	45
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Total	111	88	104

Birth rate per 1,000 of population

1952	1952	1953
27	21	25

Live Birth rate for England and Wales in 1953 was 15.5

(b) Still Births

No record was submitted during the years 1951, 1952 and 1953.

(c) Deaths

1 Death Rate

	1951	1952	1953
Male	34	26	27
Female	37	28	21
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Total	71	54	48
Average age of death	74	74	69

Death Rate per 1,000 of population

1951	1952	1953
17	12	11

2 Deaths from puerperal causes

1951	1952	1953
Nil	Nil	Nil

3 Infantile Mortality

(Deaths of infants under 1 year of age)

These were neo-natal deaths due to some abnormality.

	1951	1952	1953
Total	2	1	Nil

4 Causes of death were as follows:—

		1951	1952	1953
Cardio Vascular	Males	22	15	13
	Females	25	18	7
	Total	47	33	20
Central Nervous System	Males	—	—	—
	Females	—	—	3
	Total	—	—	3
Respiratory Diseases	Males	3	3	3
	Females	2	1	4
	Total	5	4	7
Accident	Males	—	—	1
	Females	—	1	1
	Total	—	1	2
Other diseases than Cancer	Males	3	3	5
	Females	4	5	3
	Total	7	8	8

Cancer

	1951	1952	1953
Breast	—	1	2
Bowel	1	—	1
Stomach	3	3	6
Aesophagus	—	2	—
Lung	4	1	—
Other Sites	4	1	2
Total	12	8	11

5 Deaths from Zymotic Diseases

	1951	1952	1953
Measles	—	—	—
Whooping Cough	—	—	—
Scarlet Fever	—	—	—
Enteric Fever	—	—	—
Diarrhoea	—	—	—

3. SECTION B

General provision of Health Services in the area

(a) **Nursing Service**

This is carried out by Nurse Gaskell who is employed by the Devon County Council.

(b) **Care of Mothers and Young Children**

A Health Visitor is assigned to this District.

(c) **Midwifery**

The District Nurse attends home confinements and Home Helps, provided by the Devon County Council, are available if the circumstances warrant it. Should home conditions be unsuitable for a confinement arrangements are made for the mother to go to Redhills Hospital, Exeter.

(d) **Clinics and Treatment Centres, Maternity and Child Welfare**

This is now held weekly at Newcombes. Total attendances were as follows :—

1951	1952	1953
2142	2229	2376

A large number of vaccinations and diphtheria immunisations are carried out in this clinic. It is very essential that immunisation against diphtheria should be carried out. This should be given at the age of eight months and consists of a course of two injections given at one month interval. The protection thus provided should be maintained by a further injection at five years of age when children are ready to start school.

(e) **Tuberculosis and Venereal Diseases**

There are no centres in Crediton for these diseases. Cases of Tuberculosis are seen by The Tuberculosis Officer at "Ivybank," Exeter, and he decides whether they are nursed at home or sent to Hawkmoor Sanatorium.

(f) **Infectious Diseases**

These are nursed at home and if the Doctor in attendance considers they should be transferred to hospital, they are removed to Whipton Isolation Hospital.

(g) **Ambulances**

The Ambulance service for Crediton and District is now administered by the Medical Department of the Devon County Council and is staffed and run by the Crediton Branch of the Red Cross.

(h) **Laboratory Work**

Where investigations are of a public health nature e.g. throat swabs, sputum, blood for typhoid, public water supplies, etc., these are carried out at the Public Health Laboratory, 7 Dix's Field, Exeter, as part of the National Health Service. All other investigations are carried out in the Pathology Department of the Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital.

4. SECTION C

Sanitary Circumstances of the Area

1 Water Supply

Sources. The town has four sources from which water can be obtained namely :—

- 1 Adit at Walson.
- 2 Borehole at Uton.
- 3 Borehole at George Hill.
- 4 Borehole in Newcombes Meadow.

The Borehole at Uton was brought into use in May, 1951, and has proved invaluable during dry periods in 1952 and 1953. Ample supplies have been available at all times and analyses of the water have been consistently first class. In 1952 it was decided to take water from the two main sources only i.e., Walson and Uton, and only to use the George Hill and Newcombes Meadow Boreholes in an emergency. Alterations were made to the mains so that water could be pumped from the Uton Borehole not only to the Stoney Park Reservoir but also to Landscore and Alexandra Road. In 1953 a new 15 h.p. centrifugal pump of a capacity of 4000 g.p.h. when pumping to George Hill Reservoir was installed at Alexandra Road. Since the installation of this pump, water from Uton has been pumped to Alexandra Road and from there again pumped to George Hill. It is unfortunate that George Hill which has the biggest storage capacity of all the Council's Reservoirs cannot be supplied direct from Uton.

A number of long standing complaints regarding insufficiency of water were also remedied in 1953. These were mainly in the Landscore area and work

done included the laying of 120 yards of 3 in. main. In addition a number of houses were connected to the main served by Stoneypark Reservoir instead of Land-score Reservoir which resulted in a greatly improved supply. At the present it is considered that all the properties in the town served by the Council's main have an adequate water supply.

Analyses of samples taken of the Walson Adit supply during a wet period early in 1952 indicated gross bacterial contamination, presumably through surface water obtaining access to the source of supply. In a lesser degree analyses of samples taken from the George Hill and Newcombes Meadow Boreholes indicated that these sources also were liable to contamination and it has been a wise policy to discontinue the use of these two Boreholes. New chlorinating apparatus was installed along the length of the Walson delivery main at a point where it entered the Council's District and since that date analyses of samples taken in the town have been consistently good. It should be noted however that samples taken prior to chlorination during periods of heavy rainfall still indicate that the Walson supply is grossly contaminated during such periods. It is now gratifying to be able to record that the town has ample supplies of pure water and it would seem likely that this will continue to be so for many years.

2 Drainage and Sewerage

Flooding which had been prevalent in the low lying parts of the town has not been so wide spread since an old storm channel was cleared at the Lords Meadow sewage works. During occasional heavy storms however flooding has occurred in the East Street area. It would appear that the East Street sewer becomes overloaded and probably a contributory factor is that the Mill Street sewer too runs full bore virtually blocking temporarily the East Street sewer. In order that this occasional flooding may be completely obviated it would probably be necessary to construct a relief sewer from Mill Street and also to enlarge the East Street sewer.

It is unfortunately still necessary to report that the Fordton area is without a sanitary sewerage system and the crude sewage is still discharged into the mill stream. As the mill stream is no longer required as a source of power it is no longer efficiently maintained and this serious public health nuisance has been aggravated particularly during periods of dry weather. It is however gratifying that instructions have been given for

Consulting Engineers to prepare a scheme which will provide a proper sewerage system for this area, and also the necessary improvements at Lords Meadow.

Now that the Devon River Board have powers to require a satisfactory effluent from sewage works improvements will have to be carried out at Lords Meadow; in particular, the provision of percolating filters and sludge drying beds. The disposal of the sludge from the sedimentation tanks has become increasingly difficult and unless adequate facilities are provided for dealing with it in the near future I can foresee a serious situation arising.

3 Public Cleansing and Refuse Disposal

House refuse is collected twice weekly from most of the town area; a once weekly collection is made from the remainder of the town. It is disposed of by tipping. It is unfortunate that the tip face is too high and that a proper controlled tipping system cannot be carried out.

4 Closet Accommodation

All closets are on the water carriage system but there are far too many without flushing cisterns and these should be provided.

5 Sanitary Inspection of the Area

Estimated number of inspections by the Surveyor and Sanitary Inspector and his Assistant,

	1951	1952	1953
Dairies	24	40	5
Food Premises	80	32	20
Defective Drains	39	18	10
Nuisances	11	26	6

6 Inspections made by the Surveyor for the Enforcement of the Building Byelaws

	1951	1952	1953
Foundations	4	40	48
Over site concrete	5	27	35
Damp-proof course	6	27	35
Drain tests	18	55	70
Completion	11	30	37

7 Camping Sites

There are no licensed camping sites in the area.

8 Schools

The sanitary conditions and the water supplies to the schools are satisfactory.

9 Inspection and Supervision of Food

During the three years under review I would like to stress that it was possible for a strict control over food premises and dairies to be kept only when the Surveyor and Sanitary Inspector had an Assistant. Up to the time of Mr. Webber leaving the Department in 1952 food premises and dairies were regularly inspected, ice cream and milk samples were taken at frequent intervals. Upon his departure for Military Service it was no longer possible for this work to be carried out.

(a) Milk Samples

Particulars of samples of milk taken:—

Nos. of samples taken	1951	1952	1953
Graded	8	11	—
Ungraded	10	8	—

Eight of the above samples were taken for the biological test for tuberculosis and found to be negative. The remainder were subjected to the methylene blue test and three failed to comply with the test. In these instances investigations were made at the dairies concerned but as the Local Authority now has no control over the producer such investigations cannot be made at the source.

(b) Ice Cream

Nine samples of ice cream were taken from retailers in the District in 1951, seven in 1952 and none in 1953.

Results were as follows:—

	1951	1952
Grade I	4	2
Grade II	—	4
Grade III	5	1

Two of the above samples were taken from the only producer-retailer in the District and neither was entirely satisfactory. However manufacture on the premises concerned has since ceased. The other samples were taken from retailers who mainly obtain supplies from nationally known manufacturers. It seems likely that some retailers store ice cream for too long periods and that the requisite temperature at which ice cream should be kept is not always maintained.

(c) Meat and Other Foods Unsound Foods

The amount of food surrendered as unfit for human consumption was as follows:—

	1951	1952	1953
Number of Tins and Jars	624	279	53

Other Foods

	1951	1953	1953
Sausages	--	—	18 lbs.
Ham	—	80 lbs.	—
Coconuts	—	74 lbs.	—
Brawn	—	2 lbs.	—
Raisins	—	—	30 lbs.
Fish	—	38 lbs.	84 lbs.
Cheese	—	—	9 lbs.
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Total	—	194 lbs.	141 lbs

Frequent visits were made to food premises in 1951 and 1952 but they were mainly discontinued in 1953 owing to the staff shortage previously referred to.

10 Prevention of Damage by Pest Act, 1919

Complaints relating to rats and mice were fairly frequent and were mainly dealt with by the Council's Rodent Operator. He also carried out routine treatment at Council property including sewers, Lords Meadow and the refuse tip.

5. SECTION D

Housing

The following are the number of new houses completed:—

	1951	1952	1953
Local Authority	4	20	20
Private Enterprise	—	5	12

The Spruce Park houses are now completed and a start will be made in 1954 in Butt Parks where it is anticipated that approximately 100 houses will be built.

It is hoped that in the near future a start will be made on dealing with the unfit houses in the area. It would seem that the urgent need for houses in the immediate post-war years has been in the main satisfied and that it is now those living in unfit homes who should be considered. The housing survey which I hope will shortly take place will reveal the extent of the problem and if at the same time the circumstances of each applicant on the housing list are investigated the extent of the housing need in the town will be accurately known. At the present time there are cases of people being moved from unfit houses which are then reoccupied and the new tenant immediately applies for a Council house. It would seem that many people are ready to come into town from the rural area even if it means occupying sub-standard houses. This is of course only aggravating a serious problem.

6. SECTION E

Notifiable Diseases (other than Tuberculosis) during the Year

	1951	1952	1953
Anterior Poliomyelitis	—	—	1
Smallpox	—	—	—
Diphtheria	—	—	—
Enteric Group	—	—	—

New Cases of Pulmonary Tuberculosis

1951	1952	1953
3	—	—

I am,

Your obedient Servant,

N. F. SAWERS, M.O.H.

